

"Castalian Springs"  
Castalian Springs, Tenn.

HABS No. TENN-81

HABS

TENN.

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PHOTOGRAPH

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**

**CENTRAL UNIT—ST. LOUIS**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
J. Frazer Smith, District Officer,  
Goodwyn Institute Bldg., Memphis, Tenn.

"CASTALIAN SPRINGS"  
(Residence of Col. Alfred R. Wynne)  
Castalian Springs, Sumner County, Tennessee.

Owner. Mr. and Mrs. George Winchester Wynne.

Date of Erection. 1828.

Architect. None.

Builder. A company of four men headed by Col. Alfred R. Wynne.

Present Condition. Since the house has remained in the hands of the direct descendants of Col. Wynne and since they have retained sufficient financial status to do so they have kept this house absolutely intact and have replaced where necessary any decayed or obsolete parts. It is in as perfect state of preservation as a log house can be. Certain variations and additions have been effected since its erection to conform with ideas concerning more modern ways of living. A porch extending to the rear and at the right end to connect the house with a subordinate building has been walled up and is now used as the kitchen. The original kitchen which was to the right of the house but in line with the front wall is still intact but it is not being used as a kitchen inasmuch as it is inconveniently located for carrying food from the kitchen to the dining room. The kitchen and original utensils and fire place racks are just as they were, as shown in one of the accompanying photographs. A log porch to the rear, as shown in one of the photographs, is a later addition replacing a small porch which was originally only so long as to protect the "dog trot" opening through the center of the building. The porch, as shown in the detailed photograph, is a later addition but the hand hewn joists shown in the same photograph are original as is also the stair to the second floor. Built originally as a Tavern the house was converted into a residence five years later at which time certain changes were made to make it function more properly as a residence. Inasmuch as these changes were made in 1834, we shall consider it a residence from that date. Under that assumption there have been no major changes other than those referred to above, and the only other changes have been the adaption of

certain small rooms to be used as baths and the installation of electric wiring and plumbing.

Number of Stories. The entire main section of the house and the wing to the right rear are two stories. The kitchen to the right end and the service building to the left and to the rear forming the third side of a "U" shaped plan are one story.

Materials of Construction. Foundations are of native stone. Exterior walls sawed logs with dove tailed joints and at present cement chinking. Chimneys are of native stone of the same type as the foundations. Flooring consists of hand hewn joists covered with hand made random width pine planks. The roof is of hand split shingles and to all appearances it must have replaced a similar original roof.

Other Existing Records. There are in the possession of the family records consisting of deeds, letters, newspaper clippings, etc. which give a complete account of the society, politics and business as well as the genealogy, family and relationships that are associated with the house. It is very well described and recorded in "The History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee", published by the Parthenon Press of Nashville for the Garden Study Club of Nashville. The article concerning the house in this publication is short and sketchy, but I am told by the present owners that it is correct insofar as it goes. Facts, history, etc. which will be included in this record under the title of "Additional Data" are taken from the above publication with some information injected having been given by the present owners.

Additional Data. In 1828 a company of men headed by Col. Alfred R. Wynne formed a stock company for the purpose of building and operating a Tavern on the old turn pike, now a modern highway, which led from the old Tennessee section and points east to the so-called Indian Nation in Middle Tennessee. Being unsuccessfully operated as a Tavern until 1834 it was decided by the company that it should not continue any longer operating Castalian Springs for profit. Col. Wynne bought out the other three stockholders and moved into the house with his family, making certain minor changes that were necessary for the purpose of making it his home. It has since remained in the families of his descendants as stated above in this report.

Prior to his building this Castalian Springs Col. Wynne in 1820 married Almira Winchester, daughter of General

James Winchester, the builder of "Cragfont" a residence which is also included in the HABS in Tennessee. No history of the State of Tennessee could be complete without the inclusion of Castalia Springs since the names of Spencer, Winchester, Wynne, etc. and others of historic importance have been closely associated with this house.

When Castalian Springs was originally built the town in the near vicinity was known as "Bledsoe's Lick" for it was here that Isaac Bledsoe while following the buffalo trails through Cumberland Valley and to the then unexplored camping ground of the Cherokee Indians discovered a tiny rivulet of purest sulphur water. The history of these Springs antedates that of the State, and it was the rendezvous and grazing grounds of numerous herds of buffalo, elk and other animals because of the salt the water contained." Castalian Springs was, therefore, built near this rivulet because of its health giving qualities and stands today possibly the largest and one of the oldest log houses in the State.

Inasmuch as the Post Office for the town of Bledsoe's Lick was located at Castalian Springs, so many letters came addressed to Castalian Springs that the name Bledsoe's Lick was abandoned and the official name of the town which still exists is Castalian Springs, also.

Due to the interest shown in preserving the house the generations of Wynnes have likewise preserved insofar as possible the original furnishings and have in their possession some excellent examples of early American furniture and some Eighteenth Century English pieces which are, perhaps, as fine examples as can be found anywhere. It was with great pride that Mrs. Wynne and her mother-in-law showed us through the house describing and telling little stories connected with various pieces of furniture.

Castalian Springs stands now as a monument to the hospitality and culture of the Ante Bellum days and is a constant reminder of the friendships made and the histories resulting during the gatherings which Col. Wynne so often had. He was a great friend of Gen. Jackson and raced horses with the General on his own track which is now gone, and there stands in the yard an old hickory planted at the death of Gen. Jackson which has grown to about thirty five feet in height, and which was so chosen to correspond with the General's nick-

name, that of "Old Hickory". In keeping with the authenticity of all of its historic points the owners have kept the house true to its authenticity of style. They have never spoiled the truthfulness of its construction, they have never covered or hidden its primitive beauty by clapboards or siding of any nature. The purity of the line that has grown from father to son is expressed by the purity of the house, and Castalian Springs will probably stand many more generations and for many generations tell a history in logs to all who pass on the modern highway and to all who turn and look and wonder, or stop and inquire as they pass this historic old spot.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. L. Carson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the main body of text.

"Castalian Springs" ("Wynnewood") (Wynne House)  
Old State Highway 25  
Castalian Springs  
Sumner County  
Tennessee

HABS No. TENN-81

An addendum to  
"Castalian Springs" (Wynne House)  
Castalian Springs, Sumner County  
Tennessee  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

HABS  
TENN  
83-CASPR,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

"CASTALIAN SPRINGS" ("WYNNEWOOD") (WYNNE HOUSE)

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An addendum to  
"Castalian Springs" (Wynne House)  
Castalian Springs, Sumner County  
Tennessee  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Location: Castalian Springs, on old State Highway 25, eight  
and one-half miles east of Gallatin, Sumner County,  
Tennessee  
Latitude: 36°23'40" Longitude: 86°18'59"

Present Owners  
and Occupants: The State of Tennessee

Present Use: Historic House Museum, jointly administered by the  
State and the Bledsoe's Lick Historical Association,  
Inc.

Statement of  
Significance: This large and well preserved log structure, ori-  
ginally constructed as a tavern and used as a  
residence by the Wynne family from 1834-1973, is  
the largest, most fully developed, and finest  
remaining example of pioneer log architecture in  
the United States. Owing to the prominence of the  
Wynne family--which owned the building from its  
construction until its acquisition by the State  
in December 1971--many notable historical figures  
were entertained there. The structure was designated  
a National Historic Landmark in November 1971.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1828
2. Architect: There was no architect. The hand-hewn logs  
are laid in the fashion customary at the time.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Colonel Alfred Royal  
Wynne was a member of a stock company formed to build a  
tavern on the old road that led from Baltimore in the  
East to the Indian Nation in Middle Tennessee. The site  
chosen was the Bledsoe Springs "salt lick," a spot long  
favored by wild buffalo, deer, and other animals for the

salt contained in the water. The land was part of a grant belonging to Isaac Bledsoe. (Bledsoe was the first private owner of the lick springs and the surrounding acreage. Ownership had previously been reserved by the State of North Carolina as a possible public source of salt. Around 1797, James Winchester purchased 320 acres including the mineral springs from Bledsoe's heirs. Winchester held the property until his death in 1826. The springs tract was subsequently deeded to Mrs. Almira Winchester Wynne /daughter of James Winchester and wife of Alfred R. Wynne/ as her distributive share of her father's estate.)

About the time that construction of the inn was completed, the main east-west route connecting Knoxville with Nashville was relocated south of the river in Wilson County. As a consequence the number of travelers along the road through Bledsoe's Lick was dramatically reduced. The tavern proving unsuccessful, Colonel Wynne in 1834 purchased the interest of his two partners, William Cage and Stephen Roberts, and converted the building into a residence and summer resort. At Colonel Wynne's death in 1893, the property was left to his fourteen children. His three unmarried daughters continued to live there; when the place was sold for division among the heirs in 1896, the Misses Susan Winchester Wynne, Louisa Maria Wynne, and Molly Meriwether Wynne bought the house and three hundred acres. These ladies willed the property to each other; at the death of the last one in 1926, it was willed to their nephew George Winchester Wynne. Mr. Wynne renamed the property "Wynnewood" in the early 1940s to distinguish it from the name of the surrounding community. The State of Tennessee acquired the property from Mr. and Mrs. Wynne on December 15, 1971. The property was appraised at approximately \$75,000. However, Mr. Wynne accepted \$35,000 from the State, and \$35,000 was regarded as the Wynne's contribution. Mr. and Mrs. Wynne reserved a life estate, which has terminated--Mrs. Wynne died on June 29, 1972; Mr. Wynne, on August 27, 1973.

4. Original plans and construction: The house preserves its original plan and construction, except for the few alterations mentioned below. As built, the house consisted of one large two-storied log house on a limestone foundation with separate buildings for dining room and kitchen. It did not have a front porch--steps led directly to the open "dogtrot."



5. Alterations and additions: During the period 1899-1910, when the building was operated as a summer resort, a few structural changes were made. The roof of the back porch was lowered in 1898 and the porch extended the entire length of the house. The space between the old outside dining room and the main house was framed in to create a room more accessible to the kitchen. The front porch was added in 1894. It is quite similar to the original back porch which was lengthened in 1898. A window has been cut into the end wall of the easternmost room--Mr. Wynne did not remember the date, but believed it to have been done around 1910. In some of the rooms the exposed beam ceilings have been covered. The walls of the first-floor rooms were plastered in the 1830s after the building ceased to be used as an inn and became the residence of the Wynne family. The walls of the three westernmost rooms on the second floor were plastered at a later date. Electricity and plumbing were installed in the 1930s. Provisions for modern bathrooms were made by enclosing areas within rooms. The original log walls were not disturbed by the changes. The cedar roof shingles were replaced in the 1950s with shingles of a composition material. Partitions in the easternmost section, second floor, were removed in the early 1970s and the space restored to one large sleeping room. The partitions in the area over the dogtrot were also removed, and that space restored to one large room.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The site of Castalian Springs was a grazing ground and watering place for wild animals long before the white man came to Tennessee. (The area's first known inhabitants were the American Indian mound builders of the Eastern Woodland culture, who marked out a fortified village that covered approximately sixteen acres in the flat bottom land immediately north of Lick Branch. Their earthen ceremonial mound and other smaller mounds are still prominently visible. In the late 1890s excavation of stone box graves discovered in the area yielded numerous articles of the Woodland Indian culture, many of which are in the Smithsonian Institution.) A rivulet of purest sulphur water, thought by many to have health-giving properties, prompted the builders of the log inn to erect it on this site. The property was named "Castalian Springs" after the spring of Castalia at the foot of Mount Parnassus, the habitation of Apollo and the Muses in Greek mythology. Colonel Alfred R. Wynne, who bought the inn from the other three stockholders, had married Almira Winchester, a daughter of General James Winchester (see HABS No. TENN-82) of Cragfont. He was a friend of Andrew Jackson, sharing Jackson's love for horse racing. Like many horse fanciers of the time, he had his own race track at Castalian Springs. When General Jackson

died, Wynne planted a hickory tree in his yard as a memorial to his friend. The tree, which grew to a height of thirty-five feet, has been replaced by another one on the same spot.

Many distinguished Tennesseans were guests at "Castalian Springs" during the Colonel's lifetime, including Sam Houston. A less distinguished but well-known visitor spent the night there in 1882--Jesse James, the notorious bank robber, under the alias of "J. D. Howard," enjoyed the Wynne hospitality while in Castalian Springs to buy some horses.

Colonel Wynne also served as postmaster for Bledsoe's Lick from 1868 until his death in 1893. So much mail was addressed to "Castalian Springs" that the name of the village was changed from Bledsoe's Lick to Castalian Springs. In 1898, Mr. J. B. Blakemore, a native of Sumner County recently returned from several years in Oklahoma, conceived the idea of operating Castalian Springs as a summer resort. He persuaded the Wynne sisters to lease it to him for five years. Ten frame cabins were built back of the house to accommodate guests. However, the number of travelers along the Carthage highway were few, and after a season's operation, Mr. Blakemore was eager to give up the resort idea. A Wynne cousin, Thomas P. Youree, bought up the Blakemore lease, and he and the sisters continued the operation in partnership until 1910. "Castalian Springs" was well known for its fine food and its sulphur water from the old "Bledsoe's Lick."

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Conversation, July 7, 1971, with George Winchester Wynne, owner of Castalian Springs from 1925-1971 and grandson of Colonel Alfred R. Wynne.

Nathan Harsh, Bledsoe's Lick Historical Association, Inc., to HABS, July 23, 1976, HABS Tennessee administrative files, National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

Office of the Registrar, Sumner County, Gallatin, Tennessee.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Brandau, Roberta Seawell. History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee. Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1936, pp. 275-276.

Building Conservation Technology, Inc. Log Preservation Analysis: "Wynnewood," Castalian Springs, Tennessee. Report for the Bledsoe's Lick Historical Association and the Tennessee Historical Commission. Washington, D. C.: Building Conservation, Inc., 1976.

Cochran, Gifford A. Grandeur in Tennessee. New York: J. J. Augustin, 1946, pp. 7 and 36.

Durham, Walter T. "Wynnewood." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXIII (Summer, 1974), 127-156.

Ibid., (Fall, 1974), 297-321.

Durham, Walter T. "Mexican War Letters to Wynnewood." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXIII (Winter, 1974), 389-409.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Civil War Letters to Wynnewood." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXIV (Spring, 1975), 32-47.

Thorne, Charles B. "The Watering Spas of Middle Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXIX (Winter, 1970-71), 321-359.

Prepared by John W. Kiser  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
Summer 1971 and Fall 1976

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This large and well preserved log structure and its dependencies constitute the largest, most fully developed, and finest remaining example of pioneer log architecture in the United States. The main house in itself represents a complete expression of the traditional forms employed in such architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main two-story section of this house is approximately 110 feet long and 21 feet deep. With the one-and-a-half-story "old kitchen" wing--con-

ected by a small "dogtrot" to the west end of the main house--the structure measures approximately 140 feet in length. The main house is a linear structure consisting of three connected log "pens." From east to west the first pen is three bays wide and is connected to the second two-bay pen by a "dogtrot." The dogtrot is open at the first floor and serves as an entranceway and porch. It is covered at the second level by cedar siding. The second pen is connected to the third pen with a "saddle-bag" which is covered at both floor levels with cedar siding. The third pen is three bays wide and is the only portion of the building with a full cellar. On the south rear, at right angles to the main house, a one-story frame wing containing the dining room and, behind it, a two-story log structure containing the "new kitchen," form an L-shaped complex. (According to recent dendochronology tests, the "new kitchen" appears to have been built some time before the main structure, i.e., c. 1790.)

2. Foundation: Coursed rubble Tennessee limestone, 30 inches thick. The high foundation walls raise the logs and other woodwork above the surface water and moisture from the earth.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: The main house is constructed of white oak logs with mortar. The original detached kitchen is constructed of black walnut logs; the smokehouse of walnut, ash, and oak logs; and the "new kitchen," the office, and the modern garage, of cedar logs.
4. Structural system, framing: Sturdy hardwood logs, squared to 8" x 16", are in place on the foundation for the walls of the two-story building. The first floor is supported by hand-hewn beams and joists whose ends rest on the foundation. At the second-floor level, supporting joists were mortised directly into the log walls. Ceiling joists for the second floor serve to tie the roof rafter structure together as well as to support the ceiling. The roof, latticed with wide boards, was originally covered with hand-split wooden shingles.
5. Porches: On the north (front) facade, an open dogtrot breezeway 17'-9" x 21'-0" is located at left center. A small frame front porch the width of the breezeway was added about 1894. Its shed roof is supported along the front eaves by four chamfered wooden posts. The corners of the porch are enclosed with a simple balustrade. The porch is approached from ground level by a stairway having five wooden steps, simple squared-off newel posts and

simple handrails and balusters. The wooden stair rests on a bottom step of stone. Trellis-work in-fill encloses the area beneath the porch. A porch or gallery 8 feet wide with simple shed roof and standing-seam metal roofing runs the full length of the south (rear) side. There is also a screened porch on the south end of the new kitchen, and a breezeway between the main house and the old kitchen.

6. Chimneys: There are four Tennessee limestone chimneys--two are outside chimneys at each gable end of the main house; a third is a common (double) central chimney between two three-bay, back-to-back sections of the main house; a fourth is the exceptionally wide outside chimney on the west gable end of the old kitchen.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: In general there are two-panel wooden doors and batten doors.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The windows are six-over-nine-light double-hung wooden sash (63" x 37") on the first floor, and six-over-six-light double-hung wooden sash on the second floor.
8. Roof: Simple gabled roof with composition shingles on main structure and also on old kitchen; gabled roofs with standing-seam metal roofing on both sections of south ell.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The complex plan of the main house consists of two traditional forms for multiple-room log dwellings--the "dogtrot" (two log buildings a short distance apart with chimneys at opposite ends and the central open space roofed over between the two units) and the "saddlebag" (two structures back to back, sharing a common central chimney).
  - a. Basement: There is a spacious stone-walled cellar located beneath the two westernmost rooms, or third "pen", of the main structure.
  - b. First floor: On the first floor of the main house there are four principal rooms arranged in linear fashion. The easternmost section has been partitioned into three spaces--the end room with fireplace which opens onto the rear gallery, a second room which opens onto the dogtrot, and a bathroom which is accessible from both rooms. On the west side of the dogtrot, a

door opens into the first of two back-to-back rooms arranged in "saddlebag" fashion, each with fireplace sharing a common central chimney. Both rooms open onto the rear gallery. There is also a small room at either end of the double fireplace--one, a lavatory which connects the two back-to-back rooms. The westernmost room with fireplace on the gable end opens onto the rear gallery. Though there are doors from one room to the next, general circulation is provided by the long, one-story covered porch that runs the length of the rear of the house and connects it with all the appendices save the smokehouse, office, and garage. The original kitchen to the right (west) of the house, and connected to it by a breezeway, is still intact but is not being used as a kitchen; however, the original utensils and fireplace racks are still there. The south ell consists of a dining room, and behind, the new kitchen.

- c. Second floor: The plan is similar to that on the first floor except that the partitions in the easternmost section have been removed and the space restored to one large sleeping room. The partitions have also been removed from the area over the dogtrot so that there is one large room, as there was originally. The room over the old kitchen is not directly accessible from the main house.
2. Stairways: The rooms on the second floor are reached by two stairways--the principal one rises from the dogtrot and the second, from the full-length back porch or gallery at a point one room away from the west end of the building. Stairs connect the old kitchen to the rear gallery; five steps lead down from the old kitchen level into the cellar beneath the west end of the main structure; separate open-riser stairs connect the old kitchen to the room above it. A stairway also ascends from the new kitchen to the room above, from whence there is a small opening in the wall to the unfinished, windowless attic over the present dining room.
3. Flooring: Original random-width poplar and ash floors are still found in the house.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are of log construction covered with plaster; the ceilings are also plastered. Some log walls are exposed in the large east upstairs sleeping room and in the old kitchen.

5. Doorways and doors: Simple vertical-panel wooden doors and batten doors.
6. Trim: The original simple, late Federal mantelpieces are still in the house.
7. Lighting: Electricity.
8. Heating: There are eight fireplaces in the main house and one in the old kitchen. Gas and oil heaters and stoves are also used.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is situated on a sloping wooded hillside facing north over a wide expanse of fertile pastures, creeks, and the remains of pre-Columbian Indian habitats. The front lawn descends to the roadway some 230 feet away, while the hillside behind the house rises steadily to the south.
2. Outbuildings: The dependencies consist of five log structures (the "new kitchen" of c. 1790; the "old kitchen," smokehouse, and office--all c. 1828-34; and the garage of c. 1945), several frame structures (a cottage of c. 1890, a tool shed, and a granary), and a stone springhouse.
3. Walks, enclosures: Some 400 feet of painted board fence separate the property from Old State Highway 25. About 100 feet from the highway, two stone piers stand on either side of the driveway which runs from the highway to the house. The board fencing turns from the highway and runs along the driveway to the stone piers.

Prepared by Roy C. Pledger  
Supervisory Architect  
National Park Service  
July 1971  
Ursula M. Theobald  
Writer-Editor  
National Park Service  
Fall 1976

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the summer of 1971 as part of a co-operative project of the National Park Service, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee. The work represented the second phase of an extensive recording program to document the historic architecture of Middle Tennessee and involved the recording of structures in the counties surrounding Nashville.

The project was under the direction of James C. Massey, at that time Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Supervisor of the recording team was Prof. Roy C. Pledger of Texas A&M University. The team was composed of John W. Kiser, Architectural Historian (University of Tennessee); Daryl P. Fortier, Architect (University of Minnesota); and student architects Gilbert B. Glaubinger (Rhode Island School of Design), Steve P. Roberts (Ohio State University), and Barry S. Williams (Texas A&M University). Photographs were made by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer. Plans of "Castalian Springs" drawn by James Franklin, Architects/Planners of Chattanooga, Tennessee, under a 1973 National Park Service restoration planning grant, have been photographed for inclusion in the photo-data book on that property. Further research and editorial work were undertaken in 1976 by Ursula M. Theobald, Writer-Editor, HABS.